

California State Senate

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SB 402 (De León)

Successful Breastfeeding Practices in Perinatal Hospitals

"Addressing health inequities for infants and children"

PURPOSE: Achieve health equity for new mothers and their children by requiring all perinatal hospitals in California to implement the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding recommended by the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative.

BACKGROUND:

Evidence indicates that early infant feeding practices can affect later growth and development in children, while significantly reducing their risk for infections and chronic diseases such as diabetes, asthma and obesity. **Although nearly 90 percent of California mothers enter the hospital intending to breastfeed, only about 50 percent leave the hospital breastfeeding exclusively.**

This disparity is a health equity issue since many of the hospitals that have low or very low exclusive breastfeeding rates are in areas that serve low-income women. Exclusive breastfeeding rates increase when hospitals keep mothers and babies together; encourage feeding shortly after birth; provide staff with education for breastfeeding support; and avoid unnecessary formula supplementation.

Title 22 Regulations (first adopted in 1969 and last amended in 1989) require General Acute Care Hospitals to adopt a written breastfeeding policy, but many hospitals do not have such policies in place. According to the California WIC Association (CWA), 14 out of the 22 lowest performing hospitals, those with the highest formula supplementation rates, do not have a breastfeeding policy.

The United States Surgeon General and all of the major health organizations recommend exclusive breastfeeding for most babies for the first six months and continued breastfeeding until one year of age, with the addition of appropriate foods, unless specifically contraindicated. The Centers for Disease Control's benchmarks suggest that 10 percent or fewer of breastfeeding infants should receive supplemental formula. However, according to 2009 data presented in a CWA report, "One Hospital at a Time, Overcoming Barriers to Breastfeeding," January 2011 --

fewer than 10 percent of California hospitals reached this goal. In eight California hospitals, at least 90 percent of the breastfed infants are given supplemental formula during their hospital stay.

In addition to the health benefits for mothers and their infants, there are significant cost savings associated with higher breastfeeding rates. A 2010 Harvard study found that the United States would save \$13 billion per year if 90 percent of infants were breastfed exclusively for six months. In April 2010, the Joint Commission, the accreditation organization for hospitals, began including exclusive breastfeeding rates as part of its Perinatal Care core evaluation indicators for maternity hospitals.

In 2011, SB 502 (Pavley & De León) was signed into law (Ch.511, Statutes of 2011). That bill implements step one of the “Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding” as adopted by Baby Friendly USA. SB 502 requires all perinatal hospitals in California to have an infant feeding policy in place by January 1, 2014.

PROPOSAL:

- Require all perinatal hospitals in California by January 1, 2020 to implement all Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding as adopted by Baby Friendly USA per the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative.
- Hospitals would have the option to adopt an equivalent process recognized by the State Department of Public Health.

SUPPORT: CA WIC Association (Sponsor)**OPPOSITION:** *None on file.*

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